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A PROFILE OF THE ALBERTA VISITOR

A Study of Their Attitudes and Motivations

Results of Stage I

Prepared for:

Travel Alberta

Edmonton

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summarized here are the results of the first of a two-stage study designed to develop a comprehensive profile of the Alberta visitor. The findings are based on a series of twelve focus groups conducted with people who had visited Alberta in the summer of 1982. Two groups were conducted in each of the following cities: Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal, Los Angeles, Houston, and Minneapolis.

Profiling The Alberta Visitor

Most vacationers visiting the Province appear to be pleasant, uncomplicated, middle-of-the-road people who hold the traditional values of honesty, integrity, and industry. They are particularly devoted to their families, and are clearly more interested and involved with people than material things. They tend to be concrete and literal minded, not strong on creativity or imagination. They are neither trendsetters nor jetsetters, but rather the solid, perhaps silent majority that basically keeps things in balance.

Not surprisingly, their lifestyle is centered around home and family oriented activities. They gravitate toward ordinary entertainment, such as visiting friends, occasionally dining out, and going to the movies. Many also appear to be nature lovers of varying degrees, favoring activities relating to the outdoors. They seem less prone toward physically demanding, vigorous activities, which may be partially a function of their age, which registers from the mid-30's on up.

Those coming to Alberta on business differ significantly. They express a generally greater need to achieve, to lead others, and to be independent in thought and action. There is also another small, distinctive subset of visitors who are best described as self-indulgent. Their focus is on enjoying the good life, being pampered, and having their physical/sensual needs accommodated.

The Role of Travel

Alberta visitors place a very high priority on pleasure travel, which they sharply distinguish from business travel, and trips devoted exclusively to visiting friends and relatives.

The two fundamental components of pleasure travel, linked like opposite sides of the same coin, are escape and relaxation. For a minority, this means doing nothing, simply taking it easy. Others do so by searching out an adventure. Some find this when exploring nature, others when visiting cultural or historical sites, and still others when pursuing exotic activities (e.g. hang gliding), or a fast-paced, exhilarating nightlife.

Most Alberta visitors place a high priority on people when traveling. They want to meet them, make friends, and learn how they view the world and live their lives.

Planning a Vacation

Even though most Alberta visitors expect and demand a fair degree of spontaneity and autonomy on their vacations, they nevertheless feel some planning and structure is necessary and desirable. Indeed, trip planning ... browsing through maps, brochures, discussions with friends and relatives, and a sense of growing anticipation ... is an experience almost as rewarding as the trip itself.

The Mountains, the Mountains, the Mountains!

At a psychological level, the mountains of the Banff and Jasper National Parks literally define Alberta. They are the dominant force that draws pleasure travelers to the Province, and they also serve as an important secondary motive for those coming to Alberta on business or to visit friends and relatives.

To put it in proper perspective, Alberta is not a destination per se, but rather, it is the mountains that "happen to be in Alberta."

For Canadians coming from the East, the desire to see the Rockies is instilled in childhood when they first see pictures of the majestic mountains (and particularly the magical and mystical Banff Springs Hotel) in schoolbooks, posters, etc. They know that someday they will make a "pilgrimage" to the West, to see firsthand the expanse and variety of first the Prairies, then the Rockies, and finally the coast of British Columbia.

Those from the U.S. also come to visit the Rockies, not Alberta. For them, the Rockies are most often part of a larger itinerary, including the general Pacific Northwest.

Visitors plan their Alberta trips relying primarily on advice from friends and relatives, and information acquired from automobile clubs and tourist authorities such as Travel Alberta. Travel agents play an insignificant role.

Once in Alberta, it is again the mountains of Jasper and Banff that determine the visitor's satisfaction with his trip, and without exception, they deliver on their promise. The palpably emotional experience of the mountains is so overwhelming that it overshadows occasional minor irritations or inconveniences, such as crowded highways, inadequate or unavailable lodging, etc. Visitors are also taken aback by the vast, uncrowded open spaces of Alberta.

Other than the mountains and open spaces, it is the people of Alberta that impress visitors most. Their warmth, friendliness, and sometimes disarming hospitality are rated highly across the Province, particularly in the non-urban areas.

With the exception of Calgary and Edmonton, few other specific sites or attractions in the Province register as being particularly unique, surprising, memorable, or enjoyable.

Alberta is not without its drawbacks, however. The quality of food and lodging is generally considered to be mediocre at best, and overpriced. Many visitors are also disappointed with the Province's entertainment facilities, its nightlife, theater, concerts, etc.

Calgary and Edmonton

For the most part, American visitors, if they mention Calgary or Edmonton at all, do so in a more or less neutral and perfunctory way. For Canadians, the two cities are far more likely to be a subject for criticism.

The cities are seen as having "sold out for the quick buck." The result of poor planning and overly rapid development has been a sprawling mass of concrete and congestion. Many Canadians resent Alberta for becoming "an American state." Some American visitors specifically fault Calgary for affecting sophistication, while in fact lacking true taste and culture. Those familiar with the two cities on a long-term basis note a precipitous decline in the friendliness of Calgary and Edmonton in recent years.

The Image of Alberta

Perhaps the Province's greatest advantage in the travel market is its "personality." When asked to personify Alberta, most visitors see the Province as a tall, strong, rugged male. He is most often pictured as a cowboy, a rancher, a farmer, or a "Grizzly Adams"-type pioneer.

In terms of personality traits, the fictitious character is most frequently described as:

- Friendly, easy going, and helpful
- Honest, traditional, hard working, and individualistic
- Optimistic and enterprising.

Many of the attributes perceived in the personality of Alberta are similar to those that the visitors to the Province see in themselves. This compatibility works in Alberta's favor as a desirable destination.

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSES OF THE RESEARCH

Plog Research is pleased to present the results of the first of the two-stage study devoted to developing a comprehensive profile of the Alberta visitor. The current study follows on the heels of the 1982 Alberta Travel Survey which examined travel behavior and traveler demographics.

The basic thrust of the current research is to aid Travel Alberta in gaining a comprehensive understanding of the Alberta visitor. As such, the study goes beyond the 1982 research to address the psychology and lifestyle of the visitor to Alberta, along with his attitudes, expectations, and images of Alberta vis-a-vis competing travel destinations.

As clearly articulated in the request for proposal that initiated the research, the specific objectives have been to identify, and ultimately quantify:

1. The psychographic/lifestyle characteristics of visitors to Alberta, including their attitudes, opinions, values, aspirations, interests, etc.

2. What motivates them to travel, and what do they expect from travel, both in general, and specifically with regard to Alberta.

3. Their experiences in and image of Alberta, its people, events, attractions, and facilities.

By design, the first stage of the research is purely qualitative in nature. Its purpose is to identify the range of motivations, attitudes, values, images, and experiences which characterize Alberta visitors. These in turn will be quantified by means of a large scale survey of visitors in Stage II.

We are pleased to report that the basic objectives of the initial stage have been well met. The results presented in this text not only provide the clear direction needed for Stage II, but offer invaluable insights and hypotheses perhaps unobtainable by any other means.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Of the available qualitative research techniques, the focus group was recognized as the method of choice. One of the first tasks was to sort the approximately 9,000 respondent questionnaires from the 1982 Alberta Travel Survey according to area of residence. This proved to be an arduous task, ultimately involving hand sorting of documents to get down to the level of the city rather than the Province or State.

The cities were selected not only on the basis of having a sufficient pool of potential respondents, but also in terms of how widely dispersed these respondents were. If they had been too widely scattered, it would have been impossible to encourage them to come to the facility for the focus groups. Because of their dispersion, particularly in certain U.S. cities, a considerably higher than normal monetary incentive was required to motivate attendance. Even so, the groups ultimately ranged in size from four to seven respondents, compared to the eight to ten that is typical of most focus groups.

Care was also taken to ensure that the groups would not be dominated by those visiting Alberta to see friends and

relatives. In the case of vacation travel, we wanted a good representation of respondents whose visit to Alberta was truly discretionary. Finally, an effort was made to have at least some representation of individuals coming to Alberta primarily for business related reasons.

In the end, two groups were conducted in each of the following six cities:

Canadian Cities

- Vancouver
- Toronto
- Montreal

U.S. Cities

- Los Angeles
- Houston
- Minneapolis

All twelve group discussions were conducted in early March, 1983. Seven of the twelve group discussions were moderated by Dr. Kenneth M. Travis, and the remaining five were led by Ms. Sherry McNeal. Both individuals are senior Plog Research staff psychologists thoroughly trained and experienced in qualitative and quantitative market research.

Soon after project award, a series of meetings was held with the Travel Alberta staff. The purpose of these meetings was to:

- Obtain additional information from Travel Alberta about the multiple objectives of the research, and their relative importance vis-a-vis one another.

- Develop complete agreement on the conceptual and operational approach to the study.

- Agree upon final time schedules for the project.

Following these client meetings, Plog Research developed the discussion outline that was used as the guide for the focus groups, a copy of which appears in the Appendix to this report.

RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

OVERVIEW

The insights and hypotheses generated in focus groups are directly attributable to the flexibility and spontaneity inherent in the group situation. However, the very same flexibility and spontaneity preclude the kind of scientific quantification possible in structured attitude and opinion surveys of large samples of individuals. Thus, readers should consider the findings in this text as qualitative rather than quantitative, as preliminary rather than final. Indeed, the primary thrust of this stage of the research is to lay the groundwork for the rigorous and definitive survey which will take place in Stage II.

As noted in the section devoted to research methodology, the focus groups were broadly based, including Canadians and Americans, Easterners versus Westerners, those traveling for pleasure, to visit friends and relatives, and on business. Although there are differences in response among these various types of group participants, one is struck by the overwhelming similarity of results on most of the topics investigated. Without question, <u>there is far more commonality than divergence of opinion across groups</u>.

The report to follow focuses on both the similarities and differences emerging between and within the groups. In this way, the research meets its stated objective of identifying the full range of visitor attitudes, behaviors, and characteristics, as these relate to their trip to Alberta.

THE ALBERTA VISITOR ... A PSYCHOGRAPHIC PROFILE

What makes Alberta visitors tick? What are their basic personality traits, their inner needs, their fundamental motives? Early in the group discussions, these topics were probed with one or more of the following questions:

- "What kinds of things tend to capture your imagination?"
- "Imagine you were to unexpectedly get $50,000, tax free. What would you most likely do with this money?"
- "In your own life ... in people ... in the world around you ... what's most important to you and why?"
- "What kinds of things do you want and expect for yourself in the future?"

Both group moderators, again trained as psychologists, independently come to near identical conclusions regarding the basic character of the Alberta visitor. Their

conclusions are based not solely on the verbal responses of those participating in the group discussions, but also their general physical appearance, body language, and interpersonal style of communication.

In the main, both Canadian and U.S. visitors to Alberta seem to represent what might best be described as the backbone of their respective countries, the core of the population that basically keeps things in balance. They might be called the silent majority (not to be confused with the "Moral Majority"). The defining characteristics of these individuals can be captured in the following clusters of personality descriptors:

- Reliable, dependable, stable, practical
- Traditional, conventional
- Honest, sincere
- Easy going, relaxed, contented, leisurely, patient, calm
- Optimistic, cheerful, sociable, friendly

- Thoughtful, considerate, generous, helpful

- Fair minded, tolerant, understanding

- Unaffected, unpretentious

- Mildly individualistic

For the most part, those taking part in the groups are not the avant-garde. They are not the innovators, and opinion leaders that form the leading edge of society. They tend to be concrete and literal minded, not strong on creativity or imagination. On balance they are pleasant, uncomplicated, middle-of-the-road people. For the most part, they hold the traditional values of honesty, integrity, and industry, and seem to be particularly devoted to their families.

- "You only have your kids with you for so long, and then they're grown up and gone."

- "When all is said and done, it's your family that really matters."

- "You've got to keep things in perspective, it's your family that comes first, the material things don't last."

Perhaps not surprisingly, religion plays a central role in several of our respondents' lives. Attending church and participating in church functions is common.

They tend to be clearly more interested in people than things. There is a nurturant quality to their personalities in the sense that they are more prone to look out for the welfare of others. In a majority of the groups, several individuals indicate that they routinely participate in civic and charitable activities, donating not only money, but giving of their own time.

Second, they express a need psychologists call intraception. They want to understand how others perceive and deal with the world. This is in line with their tendency to be both interested in and tolerant of other people. Most important, these traits express themselves in the types of vacations and vacation experiences they seek.

While the above character profile appears to fit the majority of Alberta visitors studied in the research, there are also a few subgroups worthy of note. Those who have traveled to Alberta primarily for business purposes seem to differ significantly. First, they tend to express a generally greater need for achievement, both in their

professional/occupational and leisure pursuits. Some also express a need for dominance, to lead or control others. Although most visitors to Alberta seem to have at least a mild need for autonomy, this is particularly true of the business traveler. More so than others, these individuals want to do what they want to do, and when they want to do it. They have a conscious need to go their own way.

There is also another subset of Alberta visitors that seem to have a strong need for what might best be described as self-indulgence. They want to enjoy "the good life," to be pampered, and to have their physical/sensual needs accommodated. These individuals seem to be somewhat more predominant among the Francophone respondents in Montreal, although they occasionally appear in other locales as well.

Clearly the questionnaire to be used in Stage II should include one or more sections on personality and psychographics that tap the various elements noted above. In some instances, there are "off-the-shelf" items that can be drawn from well researched and thoroughly validated personality inventories. In others, special, ad hoc items will need to be developed.

HOW THEY LIVE THEIR LIVES

Because of time limitations, it was not possible to develop a complete inventory of the activities and pursuits that collectively define the lifestyle of the Alberta visitors participating in the focus groups. However, the information that was generated tends to fit certain patterns. It comes as no surprise to find that for the most part these activities bear a strong relationship to the earlier described underlying personality of the visitor.

Home and family oriented activities apparently play a major role. Family outings, spending time with the children, watching TV together, etc., are a dominant feature of the leisure activities of most of the respondents. Although there is only limited direct evidence, it is plausible to suspect that crafts and mechanical activities also play a role, whether it involves baking, cooking, needlework, auto repair, woodworking, or home improvement projects.

There is considerable concrete evidence from the groups, however, to suggest that activities relating to the outdoors are important. In virtually all groups, with only the partial exception of those conducted in Montreal, the

majority of the group respondents seem to be nature lovers of varying degrees. Activities such as camping, hiking, fishing, hunting, and even simple picnics come in for frequent mention in most groups.

What about intellectual pursuits, such things as visiting museums, attending plays or concerts, reading books, etc.? Clearly some of the respondents register highly on these activities, but this does not appear to differ systematically on the basis of the city the groups are conducted in, the purpose of the visit to Alberta, etc.

Ordinary entertainment, such as going to movies, visiting friends, and dining out, seems to be a mainstay for most of our group respondents. However, the more "fast track" activities that are often subsumed under the heading, "nightlife," are probably pursued by only a minority of Alberta visitors. Essentially, involvement in these types of activities is a matter of degree. Most respondents at least occasionally participate in them, but some, most notably younger people, particularly in Montreal and Houston, tend to do so far more frequently.

Participation in sports appears to be at a moderate level. Interestingly, most Alberta visitors taking part in the

groups are less likely to take part in vigorous, "aerobic" types of activities, such as jogging, racquetball, etc. This may be partly a function of age, since a majority of the group respondents are in middle age or beyond.

The focus group setting is perhaps not the best one for developing a comprehensive profile of leisure time activities. Rather, this should be explored and quantified in Stage II. We would strongly recommend using the tentative lifestyle information generated in the focus groups as a guide for designing a thorough "lifestyle inventory." Our previous research experience has shown that such an inventory can not only be used as a measure of lifestyle, but also as a further, indirect assessment of underlying personality.

THE ROLE OF TRAVEL

As reported earlier, one of the probes used in exploring the personality of our Alberta visitors was to have them imagine they were to unexpectedly receive $50,000, tax free. They were asked what they would most likely do with this money. One would have anticipated that the group participants would be prone to say they would spend this imaginary money on travel, simply because they had been invited to the group session on the basis of their Alberta travel experience. They may have assumed they should talk about travel.

However, the scope and depth of interest in travel witnessed in the groups is far beyond expectations. Virtually every respondent in every group discussion spontaneously volunteers that he or she would spend at least some of this "found money" traveling. Judging not only by what they say, but the emotional force with which they say it, we can confidently conclude that <u>Alberta visitors place a very high priority on pleasure travel</u>.

- "My husband and I travel as much as we can, so that's what we'd do."

- "I'd pay off the rest of our mortgage and then spend the rest on traveling."

- "I'd take a sabbatical from my job and hit the road."

- "I think we'd take an around the world cruise."

When discussing travel, it becomes immediately obvious that respondents are talking specifically about pleasure travel, which they sharply distinguish from business travel, and trips devoted exclusively to visiting friends and relatives. For most of the business travelers taking part in the project, traveling on business is at best pleasantly tolerable, and at worst, abominable. It is somewhat analogous to a visit to the dentist. It is successful only to the extent that it does not result in discomfort and pain.

Vacations devoted solely to visiting friends and relatives, while perhaps not as onerous as business trips, are nevertheless categorically different than pure pleasure travel. Visiting old friends, and particularly relatives, can be an emotionally rewarding, even necessary experience, but it is often bridled with a sense of obligation, predictability, and outright boredom.

Our respondents speak as with one voice when they say that pure pleasure travel is just that, pure pleasure. The two

fundamental components of pleasure travel, linked like opposite sides of the same coin, are escape and relaxation. Mere words are insufficient to describe the emotional escape value of pleasure travel. Even though our respondents seem limited to expressing themselves with cliches such as "getting away from it all," "recharging their batteries," "getting a new slant on life," temporarily "lifting off the yoke," "getting off the treadmill," etc., the way in which they express this indicates that they look forward to such trips as nothing less than emotional emancipation. It is an opportunity to be clearly spontaneous, to be childlike (not childish) in following their whims, being tolerant of themselves, indulging themselves.

Escape and relaxation can and do manifest themselves in different ways, ways which are a function of the basic personality, motives, and needs of the individual. For some of the group respondents, relatively few, it means totally relaxing, doing nothing, a peaceful experience where the ever present goal is simply to take it easy.

- "I like to just kick back."

- "Sometimes it's fun just to do nothing at all, just to relax."

For others, it means searching out an adventure, and an escape from the ordinary. Most of our respondents find it in getting close to and exploring nature.

- "The only time I can really relax is when I'm away from the city, and close to nature."

- "We love the outdoors, there's nothing like it."

Others satisfy the need by visiting sites that have cultural or historical significance. Still others look for variety, novelty, and an almost physical sense of excitement ... this expressed either in terms of participating in unusual, even exotic activities (e.g., hang gliding) on the one hand, or fast paced, exhilarating "nightlife," on the other.

- "I like to do things that are a real change of pace, something I can't do at home."

- "I like to have a little adventure on my vacations, maybe even do something a little bit dangerous."

- "Las Vegas is the kind of town for me ... I like the lights, the action."

A somewhat unexpected and highly interesting finding is the importance the group respondents place on people when it comes to their pleasure travel, people other than friends or relatives they may be visiting. Many of them spontaneously stress how much they look forward to meeting new people on their trips, and learning about the indigenous people at their destination, their customs, values, lifestyle, idiosyncracies, etc.

- "Half the fun of going someplace is learning about the people."

- "Seeing people and how they live gives you a new perspective."

- "When I take a vacation in a new place, I want to get involved in the area just as if I lived there."

- "It's fun to 'plug in' to the people who are there."

This vacation motive ties in well with the previously reported underlying personality dynamic that causes so many of our respondents to invest so much of themselves in people in their everyday lives at home.

Clearly, all of these vacation motives need to be translated into questionnaire items to be included in the data collection instrument used in Stage II. Only in this way will we be able to tell definitively which if any of these travel motivators are, in general, cutting across all types of visitors to Alberta, and which are unique to certain subsegments of the visitor population.

PLANNING A VACATION

Since one of the key perceived benefits of taking a vacation is to gain a reprieve from the sometimes oppressive structure of everyday living, it is not surprising to find that virtually all respondents across groups expect and demand a fair degree of spontaneity and autonomy on their pleasure trips.

- "You don't need a schedule on a holiday."

Certainly the rigor of a rigidly structured guided tour represents trip planning to an extreme that almost none of our respondents would endorse. Indeed, in several groups, the research participants laughingly and derisively refer to such ventures with the phrase, "If it's Tuesday this must be Belgium."

This finding is tempered somwhat when one recognizes that the pool of Alberta visitors from which our sample was drawn included no one who came to the Province by bus. Some degree of planning and structure is recognized as necessary. In part, that degree is determined by the mode of transportation. Vacations on which travelers use a personal

vehicle are seen as offering the most flexibility. When they are behind the wheel, the vacationers can...

- o "Be their own boss"
- o "Take the side road"
- o "Let curiosity lead the way"

Typically, vacation trips where air or train travel are employed are usually somewhat more restrictive. In any case, the more remote, and "foreign" a destination is perceived to be, the greater the degree of structure in the planning of the trip. Trips to Alberta are no exception. Those coming from remote destinations, e.g., a pure pleasure (not visiting friends and relatives) trip originating from Houston or Los Angeles, where air transportation is employed, would be considerably more structured than one originating in B.C., where a private auto is used.

A partial exception to the rule involves business trips, where the traveler may take advantage of the situation to "tack on" a weekend or a few days of more or less spontaneous pleasure travel. This clearly applies to those visiting Calgary, and to a lesser extent, Edmonton, where such individuals often opt to rent a car and explore scenic spots in relatively close proximity.

Almost all our respondents agree that some degree of planning is an important component of any vacation trip. Most interesting is the psychology of vacation travel as evidenced in the group discussions. The vacation trip consists of three components of near equal importance to the traveler. First, there is the planning of the vacation, second, there is the vacation itself, and third, there is the remembrance of the vacation.

The situation is analogous to an evening of elegant dining at a fine restaurant. There is the pleasant anticipation of the planning of the evening, and the selection of the restaurant. Next comes the fulfillment of the actual dining experience itself. Finally, there is the sense of satiety and the savoring of the experience. In like manner, the planning of a vacation accounts for much of the satisfaction that the trip will ultimately provide. Browsing through maps and brochures, discussing the trip with friends and relatives, and the continually growing sense of anticipation, are experiences almost as rewarding as the very trip itself.

- "Just thinking about a trip brings out the gypsy in you."

- "When you're planning a trip, it's kind of 'dreamlike,' you kind of get removed from reality."

The trip itself is almost always enjoyed. This is partly because the travelers want to enjoy the trip, and thus are more prone to be tolerant of minor irritations and problems. Once back at home, the trip is the subject of fond recollection, "postmortem" discussions with friends and relatives, etc. Indeed, not only vacation photographs, but also the original planning materials, the maps and brochures, are kept as mementos to provide tangibility to what is essentially an intangible experience.

This entire process underlines the importance of brochures, maps, and other materials that can be used in planning a trip. Understanding the psychological role they play can help in designing materials that key into and heighten the pleasant anticipation of the trip. While such materials must necessarily be informative, they should go considerably further to tap the imagination and enhance the fantasy-like quality of the trip planning process. Since the trip planners are literally trying to see themselves at the destination, the materials should allow them to make that personal projection.

Thus far we have discussed trip planning in general. However, how does this apply specifically in the case of Alberta? Before addressing this topic, we need to have a basic understanding of the image visitors have of the Province, a subject that is covered thoroughly in the next section.

THE IMAGE OF ALBERTA

Top-of-Mind Reactions

About midway in each discussion, respondents were asked to jot down their immediate and multiple word associations to the word, "Alberta." The group participants then used their written responses as a basis for an open discussion. This approach proved to be a highly effective means of exploring the "psychological space" that the Province has among its visitors. The verbatim written responses of the group attendees appear in the Appendix to this report, and readers are encouraged to examine them in detail.

The mountains, the mountains, the mountains!! In every group discussion, the mountains of the Banff and Jasper National Parks dominate all other top-of-mind responses to the word, "Alberta." One is tempted to say that the mountains are synonymous with Alberta, but the situation is even more extreme than that. It is these mountains that define Alberta. Psychologically speaking, the mountains are not in Alberta, but rather, Alberta just happens to be where the mountains are.

In all of the groups, the discussion becomes most animated when respondents talk about the mountains. The printed word is inadequate to describe the effect these mountains have on visitors to Alberta. The following sampling of verbatim comments illustrate the point.

- "My mouth just dropped open when I first saw them!"
- "I was just knocked out by those mountains!"
- "It's like a religious experience!"
- "It just takes your breath away!"
- "As you drive through, each view (of the mountains) is more beautiful than the last."

Related to the mountains are well remembered reactions to the magnificent trees, the waterfalls, and the wild animals. The pristine wilderness of the mountains, so totally different from what one sees on a normal day-to-day basis, meets their fundamental needs for escape and relaxation on a vacation trip.

The most frequently heard description of the mountains in the group is awesome. Even multiple repeat visitors from nearby B.C. claim that the mountains never lose the power to overwhelm them, no matter how many times they have seen them.

The Rockies, then, tend to define Alberta, particularly for visitors from more remote destinations. They do so in the same way that Las Vegas defines Nevada, or Manhattan defines New York City. This highly articulate and positive image is both a strength and a limitation. On the one hand, it is a strength because it is the preeminent, and highly successful drawing card bringing visitors to the Province. On the other hand, it is so dominant in the minds of visitors, that many of the other attractions in Alberta cannot hope to compete with the mountains.

It is unlikely that much can be done to dislodge the Rockies from the visitors' mentality in favor of other Alberta attractions. A short drive from Manhattan, one shorter than the drive from Calgary to Banff, can put a vacationer on one of the most beautiful of North American beaches (the Hamptons on Long Island). Nevertheless, it would be obviously hopeless to try to exploit these beaches as a drawing card, since visitors to New York, particularly first

time visitors, will be motivated solely by the urge to see "the Big Apple." In the same way, it would be foolhardy to attempt to sell fishing excursions on the Seine rather than the Eiffel Tower in Paris, or dune buggy rides in the Egyptian Sahara rather than the Pyramids.

One implication of this finding is that Travel Alberta can most likely do more to encourage visitors to see attractions other than the Rockies, after, rather than before, they have arrived in the Province. This means that the counselors at Travel Alberta's information centers need to take on more the role of active sales people, rather than simply passive suppliers of information and advice. Recognizing that visitors enjoy spontaneity on their trips, Travel Alberta may be quite successful in directing them to other locations while on their trip.

Surprisingly, it is not another physical destination within Alberta that holds second place behind the Banff and Jasper mountains in the consciousness of its visitors. Rather, it is the people of Alberta. Indeed, Albertans are generally seen as extremely friendly, disarmingly hospitable. Their warmth and friendliness is rated highly across the Province, particularly in the non-urban areas.

- "We're not used to people being so friendly and open."

- "They're so different than in Montreal... nobody smiles or talks to strangers here."

- "They're really friendly and hospitable, they don't treat you like a tourist."

- "You don't feel they have any ulterior motive when they're trying to help you."

- "They're incredibly friendly!"

In almost every group, several individuals report genuine acts of friendship on the part of their Albertan hosts, occasions where they spontaneously offered help to travelers, physically leading travelers to their destination rather than simply giving directions, etc. The friendliness of Albertans is a "commodity" of considerable value. This is especially true when one recalls that most Alberta visitors are highly people oriented to begin with. Thus, friendly Albertans are satisfying an important need of the visitors to their Province.

Is There Anything Unique or Surprising?

Is there anything unique or surprising about Alberta that could be exploited in some way when promoting the Province? In an effort to explore this issue, respondents were asked to complete the following sentences:

- "What really surprised me about Alberta was..."
- "What was really different about Alberta was..."

The responses to both these questions once again focus primarily on the spectacular scenery of the Canadian Rockies, and secondarily on the friendliness of the Alberta population. Expanding upon the scenery, group participants underline the contrasts in scenery in Alberta. In so doing, they are almost exclusively referring to the flatness of the prairies and the peaks of the Rockies. Indeed, particularly those visiting Alberta by personal vehicle or train from Eastern Canada or Minnesota are at first near hypnotized with the seemingly unending "vast flatness" of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Eastern Alberta, and are then stupified by the colossal scope and breadth of the mountain ranges in the western part of the Province.

- "You can drive forever before you see anything."

- "There's just miles and miles of miles and miles."

- "Sometimes you begin to think it (the long drive through the prairies) never ends."

- "Nothing really stops your eyes until you see the mountains."

- "The mountains are so welcome! By the time you hit them, you're really thrilled!"

A minority of people comment on the Badlands, but their emotional reaction is far more subdued than when talking about the Rockies. Putting aside stray comments, nothing else systematically strikes the research participants as truly different or surprising about Alberta.

Any Problems?

In the main, all those taking part in the research have a far more positive than negative view of Alberta. Nevertheless, to investigate any potential detractions, the respondents were asked to complete the following two sentences:

- "Alberta is really not a place for..."
- "What really disappointed me about Alberta was..."

The weather, less than adequate nightlife, and the big cities of Calgary and Edmonton are the primary responses. In all of the groups, there were at least some individuals who complained of the weather they experienced while visiting Alberta, in terms of the extremes of temperatures, and/or excessive cloud cover and precipitation. One must recall that all respondents had visited Alberta in the summer of 1982, when the weather was in fact not up to par. Nevertheless, even with better, more typical weather, Alberta is clearly not a fun and sun, beach resort type of destination.

At least some individuals in almost all groups also find fault with the nightlife in the Province. Younger single people, and visiting businessmen, are by far more critical in this regard.

- "In most of those towns they roll up the sidewalk as soon as it gets dark."

- "Everything closes down on Sunday."

Complaints along these lines are registered most strongly in Montreal, where the need for an active nightlife on a vacation trip appears to be systematically greater. By far the greatest source of dissatisfaction are the cities of Calgary and Edmonton. Because of the importance of this issue, a separate section of the report has been devoted to it.

The "Personality" of Alberta

How does the imprint Alberta leaves on the consciousness of the visitor translate into an image of the Province? To investigate this issue, respondents were first asked to imagine that Alberta were to "come alive," and were asked to speculate as to what this living thing would be. This task proved somewhat difficult for many respondents to deal with, which underlines their general concrete, literal approach to things.

Nevertheless, given sufficient probing, they are able to respond, and typically see Alberta as an animal. Not surprisingly, the creature they picture is typically one that is indigenous to the mountains, such as a bear, an elk, a deer, a moose. Others, fewer in number, transform Alberta into a horse, or some other domesticated animal found on a

ranch or farm. Finally, a couple of individuals see Alberta as a dinosaur or mastodon, and in so doing combine size, strength, and Alberta's prehistoric landmarks into one.

Going a step further, the group participants were asked to personify Alberta, that is, to imagine that the Province were somehow transformed into a living, breathing human being. Even here, some respondents have difficulty with the conceptual task placed before them. Nevertheless, some clear-cut trends emerge from their responses.

The character they develop is almost universally male, seen as a young adult on through early middle age. He is tall, strong, and truly rugged. He is most often seen as a cowboy, although other frequent characterizations include a rancher, a farmer, a pioneer, or frontiersman, a "Grizzly Adams"-type. In any case, it is an outdoor character that is highly synchronous with the rugged beauty that identifies Alberta.

In only a couple of instances is Alberta pictured as a female. When this happens they tend to see her as a pioneer woman.

A significant minority of respondents, coming primarily from Vancouver and Toronto, personify Alberta in a different, and

clearly less flattering way. They see Alberta as an urban cowboy, a wealthy and shrewd individual, perhaps epitomized as a "J. R. Ewing" character from the Dallas television series. This in turn relates to their experience and somewhat negative preoccupation with the major cities of Calgary and Edmonton.

The descriptive adjective, Western, is conspicuous by its absence in the image of Alberta reported thus far. Clearly, U.S. visitors tend to see Alberta more in terms of wilderness and scenic beauty. In no way do they feel that it has a truly Western image, as does Texas, or other Southwestern states of the U.S. Canadians, particularly those in the East, are somewhat more likely to see Alberta as being Western, but again, this aspect of the Province's image is overshadowed by the image of its scenic beauty and spaciousness.

The "Character" of Alberta

Compared to other services and products, travel is fairly heavily invested with emotions. Perhaps even more important than what people know about a destination is how they feel about it. An effective way of tapping this dimension is to have respondents describe the personality of their

personification of Alberta. What kind of character traits might this fictitious person have?

A careful analysis of the verbatim responses of those taking part in the research, taking full account of the emotional tone with which the responses were offered, shows there are several constellations of attributes that collectively define the personality of the Province. These are listed below. Note that most of them fit in well with what we have learned thus far about the experiences and attitudes of visitors to Alberta. Note also that some of them are at least mildly contradictory, reflecting differential views among various subgroups.

- "Friendly, warm, cheerful, outgoing"
- "Kind, generous, helpful"
- "Easy going, laid back"
- "Unsophisticated, unaffected, unassuming"
- "Honest, dependable, reliable"
- "Confident, optimistic, venturesome, spunky"
- "Hard working, industrious, persevering"
- "Masculine, rugged, tough, active, energetic"
- "Robust, strong, healthy"
- "Individualistic, independent"
- "Aggressive, ambitious, enterprising, resourceful"
- "Opportunistic, arrogant, boastful"

- "Wealthy, nouveau riche, show-off, greedy"
- "Immature, impulsive, impatient, reckless, restless, noisy"

It is interesting to note that many of the attributes perceived in the personality of Alberta are either similar or identical to those that the visitors to the Province see in themselves. This compatibility works in Alberta's favor as a desirable destination.

We strongly recommend that the questionnaire for Stage II employ either adjective checklists or other rating scales to measure the perceived personality and personality traits of Alberta. Based on the focus group research, we would predict that some perceptions of the Alberta personality are almost universally held among visitors. However, others, particularly those that are less than complimentary, may be held to varying degrees among different subgroups of visitors, based on their area of residence, their familiarity with Alberta, etc.

WHY VISIT ALBERTA?

Alberta competes for the visitor's dollar with literally scores of destinations. Why do some individuals in fact visit the Province instead of going elsewhere? Obviously, this question is most meaningful when it is addressed to those whose trip to Alberta is primarily discretionary.

Business Travel

By definition, the primary motivation of visitors who come to Alberta on business is categorically different from those who come for a pleasure trip. A majority of the business travelers taking part in the focus groups chose to combine some pleasure with their business trip in Alberta. Not surprisingly, most of their business trips brought them to the major cities of Calgary or Edmonton. The things that drew them out of their downtown hotels and into the countryside are largely the same things that draw pleasure travelers to the Province, the majestic Rockies of the Banff and Jasper National Parks.

It is important to note that not all of the business travel to Alberta, at least in this past year, has been of the

typical "businessman with briefcase" type. Several individuals in the Montreal focus groups, and a couple in the Toronto discussions, came to Alberta last year primarily to search for employment, a mission in which they failed. To the extent possible, they, too, took advantage of their visit to experience and enjoy Alberta, but they clearly state they would not have come had it not been for the prospects of getting a job.

Visiting Friends and Relatives

Although the quantitative evaluation of last year's survey will give a far more definitive indication, it would seem that a substantial portion of travel to Alberta is at least partially motivated by the desire to visit friends and relatives (VFR).

As one would expect, this tendency is related to proximity. It appears to be greatest in B.C., somewhat less in Toronto, and at even a lower level in the U.S. However, it should be noted that even in Los Angeles and Houston, some individuals came to Alberta, at least in part, to see their friends and relatives. Again, in accord with expectations, VFR travelers are considerably more likely to be repeat visitors to Alberta, and in fact, several have made multiple trips to the Province.

We have already reported that most people feel a trip that is totally devoted to visiting friends and relatives falls far short on delivering the escape and relaxation that form the cornerstone of the motivations for taking a pleasure trip. Thus, it appears that more than just emotional ties to family and friends are urging these people to come back again and again to Alberta. Indeed, it is the opportunity to enjoy Alberta as a pleasure traveler that brings them back.

It is also worth noting that individuals coming to Alberta to visit friends and relatives are usually more likely to see more of the Province, and not restrict themselves solely to the Banff-to-Jasper attractions. Of course, this is in part due to the fact that many of their friends and relatives live in places far removed from the Rockies. This, however, by no means implies that the Rockies are less impressive or awe inspiring for them.

Thus, the VFR traveler's, and, to an even greater extent, the businessperson's trip to Alberta is less discretionary than those coming to the Province purely for pleasure. However, we can see that at least some of the same motivations apply to all three groups.

Thus, if we look at the motivations underlying pure pleasure travel to Alberta, we will learn much that also applies to the perhaps secondary motives of business and VFR travelers to the Province.

Pleasure Travel

For the majority of pleasure travelers, Alberta is not their destination, nor in a psychological sense, even a destination at all. Once again, it is primarily the Canadian Rockies they come to see, and the Rockies happen to be partially located in Alberta. Even more important is the fact that the Rockies themselves are often (although not always) part of a grander scheme of destinations. This scheme is largely dependent on the point of origin of the traveler.

The Rockies form the cornerstone of what visitors expect from their trip to Alberta. They expect to see wilderness, natural beauty, and vast open spaces on a scale perhaps unmatched anywhere else on the globe. Emotionally, they expect to experience a sense of peace, freedom, and a total break from the structure and confinement of city living. While the mountains dominate their expectations, visitors also look forward to seeing other attractions as well.

Depending upon their familiarity with the Province, visitors expect to see ranches and cattle (more so than farms) and ample evidence of the Province's booming oil industry.

Those coming from Eastern Canada (Montreal and Toronto), especially if they are doing so for the first time, often are making what amounts to a modern day pilgrimage. The goal is to make the trek west, to see firsthand the expanse and variety, first the prairies, then the mountains, and finally the sea in British Columbia. The important point in all this is that Alberta, per se, is not the drawing card. It is the Rockies, the West.

- "The Rockies have always intrigued me, ever since I was a little kid."

- "I always knew that someday I'd see the whole thing, right on to Victoria, B.C."

For scores of years now, artistic and commercial photographers have focused their cameras and talents on the expanse and beauty of the Canadian Rockies. The fruits of their labor are found not merely in travel brochures, posters, and magazines, but also in elementary school geography and history books.

One particular vista has at its center the Banff Springs Hotel. More than any other scene, this one plants the seed for the need to visit the Rockies. In the group discussions, the hotel is often referred to as "the castle." Group participants even in their 60's and 70's recall seeing this picture in their childhood books.

- "I remember seeing that picture of the 'Castle' when I was a little girl, I guess about the first grade, and I've wanted to see it ever since."

Judging from the manner in which the respondents talk about it, the hotel carries a sense of mystery and fantasy about it. It is to the Canadian Rockies what the Eiffel Tower is to Paris, or the Coliseum to Rome. Certainly in attracting first time visitors from Eastern Canada, literature and posters featuring the hotel are a "trump card."

Pleasure travelers originating from most U.S. destinations, in similar fashion to their Canadian counterparts, are not coming to Alberta per se, but rather, are visiting the Rockies. The Rockies in turn are part of a larger scale itinerary, oftentimes including the Pacific Northwest of the U.S. (Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana), along with the Canadian Rockies and British Columbia.

Based on these tentative conclusions, it would seem worthwhile for Travel Alberta to continue its joint promotional efforts with other western provinces, and perhaps contiguous U.S. states. Indeed, one could make the case that these efforts should be expanded even if budget restrictions call for a corresponding cut in materials and programs solely devoted to selling Alberta.

The Vancouver focus groups show that the very proximity of Alberta to that Province makes it a "natural" for vacation travel. Most of the B.C. respondents are heavy repeat visitors to Alberta. Not surprisingly, they are far more knowledgeable about the Province than those in Eastern Canada or the U.S. Along with that greater familiarity is a penchant for being more critical and discriminating, although they, too, are still extremely positive on Alberta (thus their multiple trips there). They have seen more of Alberta and on more occasions, but nevertheless, it is once again the Albertan Rockies that dominate their consciousness anyway.

The Final Decision

In spite of the fact that the focus group discussion guide was perhaps overly ambitious in the number of topics it

included, most of the objectives of the research have been well met. One notable exception has to do with the final decision to actually visit Alberta. More specifically, the question still largely left unanswered is:

> "What finally prompts visitors to opt for a trip to Alberta, rather than go elsewhere?"

While we know what the key, long-standing motivators are that bring respondents to the Province, we do not know the nature of the "psychological trip wire" that transforms vague intentions into concrete plans. This question is largely irrelevant for business travel, and perhaps at least partially irrelevant for trips made to visit friends and relatives. For those cases where the issue is germane, we can speculate that the decision is more often than not made collectively by the family, this because of the basic family orientation of most of our group respondents, and the fact that the destination is viewed as appropriate for a family vacation.

It is also worth noting that in other travel research we have conducted, we have routinely found that people have considerable difficulty in recalling and articulating the precise steps in the destination decision process.

Planning The Alberta Trip

Although there is no direct, comparative evidence from the current research, it appears that travel agents play a less significant role in the planning process for a trip to Alberta. This holds true across all cities where the groups were conducted, even locations as remote as Los Angeles and Houston.

Visitors apparently rely more on advice from friends and relatives who either live in, or have visited Alberta in the past. Next, they will acquire information from automobile clubs, or send directly to tourist authorities such as Travel Alberta for maps, brochures, and other planning materials.

Those who have used travel agents often report that their agents are insufficiently knowledgeable and ill equipped to provide them with the kind of guidance they desire. It may well be the case that agencies have ample printed material on hand from Travel Alberta and perhaps other sources, but are unaware that they actually possess the data, or unwilling to use it because of their general lack of personal familiarity with the Province. Travel Alberta should consider conducting periodic "shopper's studies" among agencies to determine their level of competence in selling Alberta, and the use they make of Travel Alberta promotional materials.

THE EXPERIENCE OF ALBERTA

We can say unequivocally that those visiting the Province, regardless of the purpose of their trip, come away satisfied with their experience. As reported earlier, our respondents are largely pleased with most of the vacations they take, and Alberta is certainly no exception in this regard. Although there is insufficient data to say how the Province compares with other specific destinations, it clearly registers very well in a general sense.

Again, The Mountains

As we have noted repeatedly in this report, it is the majesty of the Jasper and Banff National Park mountains that, more than anything else, draw people to the Province. Not surprisingly, those same mountains determine, in large measure, one's overall satisfaction with the trip to or through Alberta. Without exception, the mountains deliver on their promise.

Granted that some of the group participants talk about minor irritations or inconveniences ... crowded highways in the park, inadequate/unavailable lodging, etc. ... but these are

discussed in a relatively off-handed way. Apparently, the experience of the mountains is so overwhelmingly positive that it overshadows any such minor drawbacks.

It is not only the mountains that overwhelm visitors, however. It is also the sheer scale of Alberta, whether it is the prairies in the east or the Rockies in the west. Respondents use the word vast more than any other in describing the expanse of Alberta. For them, it is truly colossal. Many are struck with how uncrowded, even underpopulated, Alberta is, particularly when compared with the "mega-cities" many of them come from.

Other Areas

With the exception of Calgary and Edmonton, about which more will be said later, few other specific sites in the Province come in for much comment. Generally speaking, the smaller towns, particularly such places as Medicine Hat and Lethbridge, are praised for their quaint charm, and the warmth and friendliness of their people. For those who have been visiting the Province repeatedly over the years, these areas represent the Alberta of old, and in this respect can be dramatically compared with the major urban areas.

- "Medicine Hat is a really beautiful little town."

- "It's the smaller towns that are really so charming."

A substantial minority of respondents, primarily Canadians rather than Americans, have visited the Badlands near Drumheller, and a few have actually gone to Dinosaur Provincial Park. These experiences are described as interesting and worthwhile, but, judging from the "body language" and voice tones of the respondents as they talk about these places, they are <u>not</u> a major source of satisfaction. Whereas the vast majority of all visitors to the Province, regardless of where they come from, would like to visit the Alberta national parks again, few if any feel this way about the Badlands.

- "They (the Badlands) were interesting, but once you've seen them, you've seen them. You wouldn't go back again."

<u>Specific Activities</u>

Because of the limited number of potential group respondents in each of the cities, particularly those in the U.S., it

was difficult to recruit those who had had specific experiences in Alberta. None of the respondents had taken part in any fly-in fishing programs, or white water rafting. However, several had participated in trail riding and had stayed at guest ranches. Both of these activities were regarded as highly worthwhile, and thoroughly enjoyable. Moreover, they were seen as fitting in well with the perceived character and image of Alberta.

Interestingly, while some respondents had visited the Calgary Stampede or Edmonton's Klondike Days, these events did not register strongly. They are mentioned only in passing, and are not a subject of much animation or interest.

The Service People

We know that the friendliness of the people of Alberta catches many visitors off-guard. It is often reported as one of the more pleasantly memorable aspects of their visit to the Province. Can the same thing be said for the service people they meet? What about those who work the restaurants, the hotels, etc.? The answer is a qualified yes. For the most part, the warmth and friendliness of the service people in Alberta is rated highly. However, this

tends to be more true of non-urban areas, less true, as shall be discussed later, of Calgary and Edmonton.

The Facilities

The facilities themselves, however, are not rated nearly so highly. Lodging in the Province is seen as at best average in quality, but overpriced and a poor value for the money. A few group respondents report having spectacular meals while in Alberta, but they are the exceptions that prove the rule. On balance, the quality of food in the restaurants is thought of as mediocre. This is in spite of the fact that the prices of the food, and the exaggerated descriptions of it on menus would lead one to expect much more. It would appear that there is considerable room for improvement in this regard. Interestingly, these comments hold true for both big city and rural Alberta.

Entertainment

Visitors also tend to be at least somewhat disappointed with the entertainment facilities in the Province. As we have already noted elsewhere, Alberta clearly does not measure up when it comes to "nightlife." The same holds true for live theatre, opera, ballet, concerts, and so forth. Thus, to

the extent that promotional materials promise an exciting nightlife and broad based cultural activities, that promise is not being fulfilled.

THE BIG (BAD?) CITIES

Calgary, and to a lesser extent Edmonton, tend either to be mentioned in a more or less neutral and perfunctory way, or they become the subject for criticism. Certainly the two cities do not absorb much in the way of positive "emotional space" in the psyche of the visitor. More than anything else, the two cities register as being "out of sync" with the rest of the Province. In terms of image, they simply do not fit.

Some visitors, particularly Americans, assume that every place must have at least a couple of large cities, and in Alberta they are Calgary and Edmonton. As such, they are taken as a matter of course, and more or less dismissed from further consideration.

Canadians are more likely to focus on the two cities in a negative manner. While recognizing the cities as modern and growing, they nevertheless see them as epitomizing poor planning and overly rapid development. Those in B.C. particularly see Calgary and Edmonton as having been corrupted by Easterners (Toronto/Montreal) and Americans (Wall Street/Texas). There is some resentment of Alberta's

being an "American state." The cities are seen as having "sold out for the quick buck" with resulting concrete, congested, and unlivable cities.

Calgary is the bigger culprit of the two, a sprawling mass of buildings and pavement, "the worst of two worlds" (Eastern Canada/Texas). Older Canadian visitors who have known the Province over a period of years decry the "loss of innocence" so evident in the two large towns.

- "There's money oozing out of those skyscrapers."
- "It's a fast-growing, glassed-in place filled with lonely people."
- "There's no roots left there, it's all ripped up."

Calgary is also seen as an <u>affectation</u>. It is a city that wants to give the impression of being sophisticated, urbane, cosmopolitan, a center of taste and culture. However, it is in fact only a poor and superficial imitation of the "true" cities of the world. This latter view is held not only by Canadians, but by their American counterparts as well. The focus groups in Houston, again largely attended by those who visited the Province on business, tend to see Calgary as "a second rate imitation of Houston."

- "They'd like to think they're really with it, but they're not."

While Calgary and Edmonton are seen as friendly places in comparison to the hometowns of the visitors taking part in the research (Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Los Angeles, etc.), they are seen as being not nearly so friendly as the towns and communities elsewhere in Alberta. Those familiar with the two cities on a long-term basis routinely volunteer that they have noticed a precipitous decline in the friendliness of Calgary and Edmonton over the last several years, a decline coincident with the oil driven economic boom.

If these findings are fully corroborated in the Stage II survey, and one would certainly hypothesize that they would be, the results will present Travel Alberta with a perplexing problem. Efforts to promote Calgary and Edmonton as specific destinations within the Province will find an unbelieving, and perhaps somewhat hostile audience among those who are already familiar with these cities. For those who are not, perhaps potential visitors from the States, emphasizing the big city character of the two towns could possibly confuse those who have come to think of Alberta for its pristine wilderness, and may even discourage them from making the trip at all.

APPENDIX

Project No. 6585-2

DISCUSSION GUIDE

- Self-introduction of moderator, purposes of the research
- Mutual introduction of group respondents

Psychographics/Lifestyle (20 minutes)

- What kinds of things tend to capture your imagination? (Paper and pencil, then open discussion)

- Imagine you were to unexpectedly get $50,000 tax free. What would you most likely do with this money? (Paper and pencil, then open discussion)

- In your own life ... in people ... in the world around you ... what's most important to you and why?

- What kinds of things do you want and expect for yourself in the future?

- What kinds of things do you <u>most</u> enjoy doing?

- What do you actually <u>do</u> most often?

- What else do you do with your time?

General Travel Motivators and Experiences (20 minutes)

- Generally speaking, how spontaneous are your vacations as opposed to being thoroughly planned?

- What do you want most out of your vacations? (Heavy Probe) How do you *feel* when you're planning a vacation?

- Thinking of the vacations you may have taken over the last few years, which ones have been most enjoyable? Why?

- Which ones have been least enjoyable? Why?

Alberta Image (15 minutes)

- Respondents jot down immediate and **multiple** word associations to the word, Alberta.

- Respondents complete "sentence stems."

- Open discussion on word associations.

- Open discussions on sentence stems:

  -- "If there was one thing I really liked about Alberta, it was..."

  -- "Alberta is really not a place for..."

-- "What really surprised me about Alberta was..."

-- "What really disappointed me about Alberta was..."

-- "What is really different about Alberta is..."

-- "Alberta is much the same as other places when it comes to..."

Alberta Motivators (15 minutes)

- (U.S. respondents only) How and when did you first hear or learn about Alberta?

- Thinking back for a moment to when you were planning your trip to Alberta, jot down a few notes that would help you answer the journalistic who, what, where, when, and especially the why of the whole process that led you to actually visit Alberta.

- Open discussion of above. (Heavy probe)

Alberta Experience (15 minutes)

- Overall, how did you feel about your visit to Alberta? How did it compare to what you expected? (Heavy probe)

- What did you do when in Alberta, and how did you feel about what you were doing?

  -- General comments

  -- If appropriate, visits to "World Heritage" sites

  -- If appropriate, "adventurer" experiences

    -- Trail riding

    -- Guest ranches

-- Fly-in fishing

-- White water rafting

-- If appropriate, convention experiences

o How would you rate Alberta in terms of:

-- The warmth and friendliness of people in general?

-- The warmth and friendliness of its service people?

-- The quality of the facilities, such as accommodations, restaurants, and recreation and entertainment facilities?

Projected Image (15 minutes)

- Now I'd like to have you use your imagination. If Alberta were to "come alive," what would it be? (Heavy probe)

- Now I would like to have you personify Alberta, that is, imagine that Alberta were somehow transformed into a living, breathing human being. If Alberta were a person...

  -- What sex would it be?

  -- How old would it be?

  -- How would this person dress?

  -- What kinds of personal characteristics would this person have?

-- What would this person drive?

-- What would be most likable about this person?

-- What might be some of this person's drawbacks?

-- Other similar probes.

- What is it about Alberta that gives you this image?

- Other topics of interest arising spontaneously.

VERBATIM SPONTANEOUS ASSOCIATIONS TO THE WORD, "ALBERTA"

Houston

Banff, mountains, museum in Calgary, Alaska Highway, Jasper ice fields, LRV's in Calgary, ESA meetings

---

Alberta - mountains - clean air - rain - snow - ice fields - friendly - pleasant - good friends - Calgary -

---

Oil, rivers, mountains, Calgary, Edmonton, hockey (Wayne Gretzke), Lakes

---

Beautiful, country, refreshing, not crowded, Lake Louise, Mountains

---

Snow - Edmonton - Calgary - Stampede - Banff - Lakes - Sunshine - Slave Lake - Fishing - Moose Hunting - Duck Hunting - Peace River - Athabaska - Oil

---

Friendly people, beautiful country, Calgary a nice city

Green, sunny, Lloyd Jensen, TAM Canada, Mountains, Mormons, Four Seasons, Banff, Western Airlines, trails

---

The best place to see in Alberta is Waterton Lakes and the Prince of Wales Hotel. The other is Banff and the view from the ski lift (never forget the shape of the mountain). Also like the Canadian Rockies overall. They are splendid. Had one of the best dinners of my life in Calgary; a chateau briant (sic) at a Holiday Inn there. The places I stayed at were very clean.

Mountains, streams, snow, cool/cold weather, driving mountain roads, sitting by campfires, fishing, cozy mountain cabin

Los Angeles

Beauty, Calgary, Banff, Lake Louise, Canadian Rockies, good highways, friendliness

---

Nice place to go but didn't have good impression of customs. Peaches, friendly people

---

Mountains/Dahl sheep/rate of exchange
Suggest to the Canadian and Albertan tourist bureaus that they would be well advised to publicize Jasper (city and park) more. Most people familiar with Banff, etc.

Great - Good fruit, Banff, fine vacation place, good food, very nice people

---

Canadian Rockies, Calgary, Edmonton, Athabasca Glacier, Banff, Jasper, Lesser Slave Lake, Peace River, Lethbridge, animals, rivers, lakes, grainfields, people, malls, Stampede, Klondike Days Celebration, honor credit cards

---

Friends, beauty, ballooning, the beauty of the woods around there, sailing, driving, hiking.
Friends, beauty, mountains, rivers, wide sky, sailing, hiking, ballooning, driving, fresh air, good food on the farm, peace, pine trees, glaciers

---

Alberta - Calgary - Inn - gondola - sheep - longhorn - mountains - hot springs - snow - Calgary - Lake Louise - Jasper - moose - elk - quaint

---

Canada, Calgary, Banff, Rockies, snow, clean, space, trees, farms

---

Calgary, Granny, Aunt Dot, windsurfing, cold, mosquitoes, Banff, Lake Louise, canoe, Kay, strawberry pie, quilts, piano

---

Scenery, rain, mountains, wildlife, food, people, roads, courtesy relaxing, rivers, glaciers, cabins, fish

---

Beautiful, mountains, train, pass, snow, Banff, Lake Louise, Moraine, Springs Hotel, joy, pleasure, fun, food, drinks, nice people, great weather, Seven Peaks skiing

Minneapolis

Gorgeous, fun, expensive, sore legs from horseback riding! Nice place to live if you could afford it.

Scenery - Snow - Lake Louise - Animals - Courtesy of drivers - Hospitality

---

Mountains, scenery, glaciers, fun, travel, high prices of motels and hotels, prairies, friendly travel help

---

Edmonton's terrible traffic and bad traffic signs, beautiful Banff and Jasper Parks, nice freeways, fast driving, beautiful scenery

---

A little bit of everything - Water, Mountains, Cities, Desert, Forest, Plains, Ethnic groups, Oil, Hockey, Dinosaurs, Bears

---

Mountain - good clean lakes - good road (not much traffic) - good walking trails

---

Modern (Calgary), somewhat international atmosphere (Calgary), scenic, hospitality

---

Beauty, different, pleasant, green

Relatives (Stampede, Calgary), mountains, Banff, quality of life, fresh air, nice climate

---

Calgary, horseback riding, cheap motel, nothing east, Banff area, last view of the mountains, stopping to take a survey at 7:00

Canada - Beautiful - Like Minnesota except for corn - Now have silos - Relatives

---

Canadian Rockies - sheer beauty - tranquility - water - trees - nature's magic

---

Plains, mountains, Banff main street, old hotel, mountains, bears. I want to go back and see the museum in Banff, walk on the ice fields, just sit in a campground or cabin, explore the purchase of a mountain cabin. Two days away from Minneapolis.

Green, rolling, breathtaking, uninhabited, untouched, simple

Montreal

Dry, colourless, concrete, superficial, modern, proud, western, jean-jacket and cowboy hats, mines, Canadian, industrious, commercial, wide, in-between

---

Boring, small cities, no nightlife, dead, conservative, working cities, no population, no action, mountains, lakes, open aires, forests, behind schedule, no concentrations of people

---

Mountains, valley, glacier, Calgary Tower, Banff, Hot Springs

---

Open country - bear - snow - Rockies - sand - oil - money - big car - very costly - unstable

---

Mountains, clean, friendly people, quiet city, animals, lack of greenery in city, beautiful scenery out of city limits, good food and great restaurants, good hotel accommodations

---

High building, clean, nice scenery, mountain

Blue sky, trees, nice people, expensive rent, relatives, mountains, great hang gliding, good motocross trails, great skiing, beautiful scenery, bad road conditions

---

Rockies, parks, Calgary, Edmonton, prairies, poor weather, good weather, Stampede, railway, lakes, bears, camping, tourists, oil

---

Scenic - oil wells - ranches - fishing - camping - far - different

---

Mountains, glaciers, Lake Louise, bear, National Park, nature, cowboy hat, spring water

---

Mountains, green, golf courses, meadow, country, oil, cowboy, west, topography, conservative, fun

Toronto

Blue collar - transit lonesome - beautiful - laid back and dressed down - tourist - artificial - oil - conservative - Lougheed - cows - friendly

---

Beauty, mountains, variety of scenery, dinosaurs, friendly people, info booths, variety of weather, excitement

---

Beautiful - great place - open - large open concept - lovely - nice parks - people friendly

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Mountains, prairie, Banff, clear waters and rivers, rain, lakes, Calgary, Vermillion River, oil wells, antelopes, canyons, tree line, Hot Springs (swimming)

Mountains, friendliness, big blue skies, animals in the mountains, mountain climbing, riding up in a gondola, feeling the squirrels (?) whatever they are, long tough driving, good atmosphere in Jasper and Banff

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Hospitality, beauty (natural), heritage, bad drivers, friendly, variety, local colour, good roadside parks

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Cold, wet, friendly, picturesque, windy

Plains, flat, windy, mountains, new and old, expanse, good highways on main routes, moody climate

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Mountains, vastness, oil, vibrance, enthusiasm, growth, friendly, new economic awakening, freshness, frontier, cattle, coal, distance, long summer days, fresh air, mountain roads, glaciers, parks, skiing

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Mountains, river, lakes, hiking in mountains, snow, ice fields, glaciers, wheat fields, grain, ploughing and rotating crops. Forests, museums, oil fields, tar roads, parks

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Mountains, Calgary, oil, Stetsons and string ties, Stampede, grain elevators, hot air balloons

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Holiday, fun, horseback riding, interesting people, new places, new adventures, nice place to live

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Mountains, flat prairie, Suffield, geological, Glenbow, Banff, Jasper Park

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Vancouver

Lakes, badlands, Hawaiian food, relatives, flat, pictures, horses, graveyard, airplane, carsick, food, rum, tequila, poetry, sand, birds, Hoodoos, backpack, ranch, cats, shopping, restaurants, friendliness.

Mountains, horses, saloons, Stampede, prairies, foothills, oil wells, wheat, industry, Indians, totem poles, north, fishing, camping, dirt roads, pancakes, ducks

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Mountains, people, Calgary, Edmonton, snow, flat, roads, horses, sunshine, oil, money, wind, glaciers, wheat, happy, friendly, moving, hustle, alive, growing, conservative, education, cars, streams, hiking, Banff

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Rockies, mosquitoes, flat, hills, buffalo, backpacking, sun, grass, Northern lights, oil wells, Calgary, snow, USA, American, hot, dusty, Banff, glaciers, skiing

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Prairies, American-like cities, Banff, Jasper, Calgary, Edmonton, unlivable cities, skiing, incredible mountains

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Chinooks, mountains, desert, friendly people, good highways, no sales tax, good resort facilities, reasonable imported wines, good fishing, good tourist information assistance, cheap gas

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Home, family, still growing, not stagnant, like a teenager full of energy but hasn't quite learned how to behave, boom and bust extremes, spirit, proud, rough (positive)

Solitude, money, cold cities, warm countryside, opportunity, (mountains) cold, fresh, breathtaking, good government, oil

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Beautiful, scenic, mountains, lakes, parks, skiing, oil, farming, progressive, friendly

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Beautiful - two cities - good roads - new and large buildings - friendly people - good business - oil rigs - farms - mountains - open land - money - cost of housing - Calgary Stampede

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Friendly, scenic, holiday, business, oil and wheat and beef, busy, mountains, water, poor campgrounds, poor motel

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Good roads, conservative, farming, oil, progressed immensely in the last ten years, beautiful summers and falls, born there, go often to see friends and business, Jasper and Banff, Province next to B.C., good roads

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Beautiful, nature, grandparents, sunshine, beaches, friends, relaxation, people, Indian battle park, coolies, sports, tour spots, holidays, Banff, prairies

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Vistas, mountains, lakes, Banff, Springs, Jasper, dusty and dirty, clear blue skies over rolling ranges, cattle, oil, friendly, hustling, new buildings, raw land, rough type people in expensive restaurants, exploring the far north, Lougheed, oil sheiks, poor hospitals

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SENTENCE COMPLETIONS

"If there was one thing I really liked about Alberta, it was..."

Houston

Rocky Mountains

Everything (scenery)

Beautiful scenery

The mountain communities - friendliness - good clean air and peaceful

The foothills area into the mountains.

Talking with farmers in the fields and small cafes; wide open spaces.

The beauty of Waterton Lakes and the Prince of Wales Hotel.

The people, low crime rate.

Friendly people

Los Angeles

Beauty, friendliness, good highways (wide)

That most of the people I met were friendly.

Jasper National Park. I had been to Banff (Lake Louise) a number of times in childhood and since, but never Jasper before.

The Vastness

Magnificent scenery, friendliness of the people and so much of activities in which one can be involved.

Banff, and the Summer Musical Festival -- to be able to stroll around, take the bus to the mineral springs, drive through the mountains.

The waterfalls

The hills and lakes around Louise and Moraine.

Scenery

The people, mostly because I visit my relatives.

Camping in the Banff-Lake Louise area.

Canadian Rockies - Lake Louise - Calgary - scenic beauty

Minneapolis

Friendly people

Banff - Lake Louise - scenery and hiking trails

Many different scenes within a close area

Scenery and wilderness

Beautiful mountain ranges -- one after the other -- and animals

The mountains, the scenery, the ability to get into quiet areas all by yourself.

Scenery and animals

The Canadian Rockies

Nice roads, mountain birding, nice prices, mountains. I thought the people were friendly. Northern lights were beautiful.

The spirituality of the mountains, lakes, glaciers

Scenery

Prices were fair, motels and food in particular. Mountains

The mixture of today and times gone by - modern, yet not forgetting to remember history

The beauty.

Montreal

Mountains in Banff

Provincial parks

Mountains and wood walking

Lake Louise

Driving to view the scenery, and animals

Very clean and friendly and lovely mountains

The fantastic scenery while hang-gliding

The varied and spectacular scenery

The scenery. It was different

National Parks, Banff and Jasper, because of the animals and the beautiful nature

Friendly people who helped you. They answered questions and showed you where things and places were.

Toronto

Banff and the friendliness of the community

The mountains, Jasper - my first view of them

Spectacular views of the mountains.

The first sight of the Rockies

Mountains and camping.

The scenery.

The hospitality and friendliness of the people

Friendly

The drive from Jasper to Banff, the scenery in between

Mountains and broad spaciousness

The mountains

The Banff area

New experience in meeting my brother in his favourite environment.

People of different backgrounds and experience from mine.

Vancouver

The mountains, the national or provincial parks

The beautiful scenery in the Rocky Mountains around Banff and Lake Louise

The mountains and openness of the Province, the friendly people and very good memories

The scenery

Banff, Jasper. Certainly has a good variety of restaurants etc. since I left 13 years ago.

The sunshine, and people.

Friendly people.

The Rocky Mountains.

Banff -- hiking into Assiniborne and other hikes in the park. Visiting the grand old Banff-Springs hotel.

Friendly people.

The freshness of the people, different sort of "red-neck" which is fascinating to see

The people are friendly and have a sense of purpose. I didn't detect any "poor me" attitudes.

The friendly people.

The way the mountains look in the morning from southern Alberta

"Alberta is really not a place for..."

Houston

Non-adventurous

Vacationing, exploring, getting away

Outdoor swimming in the winter

Shopping, fine dining except Calgary

Winter living

Vacations - maybe I did not visit "vacation" areas. I drove from Calgary to Edmonton.

Enjoying a hot climate.

The nightlife.

Large crowds.

Los Angeles

Trying to save money.

Surfing.

Those who do not like outdoor scenery and recreation.

Inexpensive hotels, or good restaurants reasonably priced.

Fraidicats.

People who don't like space and majesty

Idleness

Late night dancing - wildness of New York or Los Angeles

Everybody.

Surfing

Minneapolis

Swimming

Alligators, tropical fauna

People who don't enjoy open spaces

Swimming and sunning

People who don't appreciate nature and all the pleasures that come from enjoying it.

Swimming in June

Boring people

A quiet walk alone in a deep forest without watching for bears or leaving garbage out in a campground.

City folk

Deep sea fishing

Montreal

Digging deep into the psyche of the Province, such as Quebec or the Maritimes would be. It's not a place to be different, nonconventional and enjoy wild things (nite-life).

Action, nightlife

Beaches

People without money

Nightlife

Nightlife

Keeping your money

Sitting and doing nothing

Business

Go to swim because the water is too cold

French.

Toronto

Being lonely

Stay at homes.

Hot fast movers - slow.

Loafing around.

Staying in one place

Nervous drivers

Lover of dense population

Culture

Vancouver

Nightlife.

Camping. There are not many provincial and other campsites throughout the Province; in the mountains there are more, but not a lot.

People who like large cities and nightlife.

Camping

Sunbathing beside sandy beaches.

Camping

Living

(Living) cities.

Someone who likes living in a city with lots of parks, green space.

Someone who doesn't like winter weather.

Singles, meeting people, huge bars, etc.

Lazy people

Beaches and swimming.

Gambling.

"What really surprised me about Alberta was..."

Houston

Urban sophistication co-existing with frontier unpopulated wilderness

It was really like the postcards.

The friendly people

The roads to and through the mountains - good roads

The contrast from East to West

It was like a large portion of Texas - Houston to Austin

The widespread use of the French language

There were no blacks.

Beautiful country and variety of animals.

Los Angeles

Modern and large, growing city like Calgary; there are other places besides L.A., clean

The dislike people had for the people of eastern Canada, French, and the Prime Minister.

The tidiness and convenience of the campsites.

The farming

Their wealth of resources -- the variety of scenery and recreational activities.

How many beautiful wild flowers there are in the woods around Innisfall, and mountains so close to Calgary (Cannasis)

The majesty

The beautiful scenery -- it was more than I expected.

Variety of scenery.

Beautiful scenery

The friendly people

Breathless clean beauty, orientals, building Calgary

Minneapolis

How modern Calgary was.

The color of the glacial lakes and rivers, the number of Europeans in Canada.

Fast traffic

The good roads and travel help

How well planned it was -- both in the wilderness and in the city.

Such happy people

Its beauty. I thought it would be flat and desolate like Eastern Montana.

Tourists from all over the world. They would be so interested in my opinions and reaction to my travel there. It is so close to home with mountains better than the US Rockies.

Banff in the summer was as magical as it is in the winter

Like Minnesota

More things to do than I had thought. We had not planned to spend time there but learned there was quite a bit to do.

How very modern Calgary was.

Number of mountains.

Montreal

How proud and defensive the people were. They were proud of their natural resources, but in a defensive and guarded way.

People so conservative and boring

Size of the mountains

Rapid growth

How empty the city is on the weekends.

All the sizes of the buildings

The friendly people

Less animals than seen on previous trips

The land was so flat. It was something my sight wasn't accustomed to, but I liked it.

The beautiful water of Lake Louise in particular.

Toronto

Vast and underpopulated

The variety of scenery, landforms

The friendly people.

No wild animals in the national parks like it states in the folders.

Small cities. Roads - excellent. Animosity.

Some of the people were very snarky about Ontario -- they blamed ME for Trudeau.

The price of gas, the beauty and variety of the scenery, no taxes.

Cold, wet, for August

How much of a physical (geographical) contrast there is

Size and wilderness

The good roads, the friendly people.

Unattractive housing in Calgary

How much I liked it there

Anti-East (Toronto) feelings

Vancouver

The scenery, the mountains, the money evident in Edmonton and Calgary.

The tremendous growth in size of their two major cities

The beauty and friendliness

The stark beauty of the badlands

How much it had progressed in the last 10 years.

It can get really windy; growth of cities

The incredible expansion

The growth since my childhood, especially urban growth.

The Rockies, how little planning has gone into her major cities.

Variable environment, mountains, rolling hills, flat plains.

The selection of cultural events -- not so isolated culturally --and the support given them.

The sense of optimism and opportunity and Japanese.

The flatness.

How really nice the northern regions were.

"What really disappointed me about Alberta was..."

Houston

Nothing

The price of gasoline (it should have been lower).

Rainy season is too long.

The development of Calgary into an overcrowded city.

Nothing

The distance to get there

The food.

The limited time I had there and not able to see as much as I would have liked.

Los Angeles

Inflation, speeders.

Nothing to mention.

Money exchange

I have never been disappointed about anything in Alberta.

Expensive hotels; overpriced restaurants, high priced groceries

The growth of Jasper area

My wife was ill one day and couldn't enjoy the walks around Banff Springs Hotel

Nothing

The small town prejudices

Rain

Minneapolis

Was rather pleased with what I saw of it.

Summer of '82 was cold and wet

Not a lot of cultural activities outside Edmonton and Calgary

Edmonton's terrible traffic and road signs. The rest was good.

The high prices of motels and difficulty in making reservations.

The lack of road signs -- got lost several times because there was either no easily visible sign or there was a sign that only had place names and not the route number.

Snow on June 8th, Lake Louise frozen

The border patrol

The fear of bears in the National Park

Calgary

Nothing. I only traveled through and had no problems. Roads were good, people courteous.

How far the Edmonton airport was from the city.

Lack of time I had to spend there.

Montreal

The sad lack of things to do in the city

The emptiness

Cold water; just can't swim

Lack of horse

Lack of live theatre

The bars' closing at midnight

The weather in the mountains, the sprawl of Calgary, temporary appearance of structures and poor quality housing construction

Nothing really

The weather; in the night it was really cold

The conservative and early closing

Toronto

Calgary -- a fast growing lonely glass place where everyone is a transient and very few people have roots.

Didn't see the bears.

Change.

No wild animals in the national parks like it states in the folders.

Rain (1982 was bad summer)

Can't think of anything

Not enough detail about some of the tourist attractions

Nothing really -- will go back again

The distance between small places

So far away

The accommodations data

Calgary

Nothing.

We could not buy some of the posters shown in the tourist bureaus

Vancouver

The coldness of the cities, the rushed pace of the population

The fact that the people were in a constant rush, not taking time to enjoy life. This was in Edmonton and Calgary, not smaller towns.

The Calgary campgrounds and motels.

I can't say that anything did.

Poor hospitals and dirt

Its American type aspirations.

The Rockies. How little planning has gone into her major cities.

Nothing.

Camping facilities by comparison. After B.C. they paled.

I found them very "provincial."

The freezing winters.

The weather in February.

"What is really different about Alberta is..."

Houston

Uncrowded

It's not like Texas. Climate is fresh and clean.

The free use of the word "ay" in people's speech.

That it isn't crowded.

Everything is so new.

Not much of anything

The terrain and the low crime rate.

Vastness

Los Angeles

Lake Louise, etc.

Nothing

... and its national parks is that it is still much more primitive, in the unspoiled sense, than the National Parks in the U.S.

Fine country.

The variety of the terrain, mountains, glaciers, rivers, lakes, etc.

The wonderful feeling of freedom as you drive towards the Rockies; the River Bow flowing through Calgary.

The snow covered mountains

It is clean and fresh -- green and wholesome.

Alberta is more friendly than most of the other provinces.

Weather -- the change from LA

The geography, climate

European flavor

Minneapolis

They care a great deal about the people who visit there.

The mountains compared to Minnesota

The welcome by government travel agencies -- really helpful -- and the uninhabited spaces to explore.

Its ability to remain friendly despite the encroaching civilization.

Courtesy of the auto drivers on the highways.

There is so much land and so few people. It's refreshing and clean.

It has a lot of variety, mountains, plains, ethnic towns

The extremes of nature

Easy going people -- not in a hurry

It's not that different except the mountains

More cowboys per capita

The change from the flat lands to the mountains.

Montreal

The way and manner the people spent their money

The way of living

Oil

The pace of living is slower

You can't get lost like Montreal

Everyone was English speaking

The price of gasoline

The scenery

The glaciers and the water

That is all English and there is no French. Also there is an openness to Alberta.

Toronto

Mountains.

Vastness.

Rockies on one side, flat on the other side

Scenery, dryness

It's big.

The variety

Open country

Friendly people

The scenery and the grain elevators

The Rockies

Everything -- people, places, things to do

Indian history and background -- not a long way back (fairly recent)

Vancouver

The attitude of the cities.

The contrasting scenery. From mountains to wheatfields to ranch land.

Its friendliness (reduced however from this factor in the 60's)

All the influence of easterners lately

Everyone seems to make life enjoyable and live to the fullest and welcome newcomers.

Lougheed and his handling of the political scenario.

The contrast of prairies to mountains

The contrast of plain and mountain.

No sales tax.

The combination of prairies and mountains

The friendly attitude of the people

Flat land, Drumheller (badlands, etc.)

There is a broad range of people types -- cowboys to executives.

"Alberta is much the same as other places when it comes to..."

Houston

Rules on hunting and fishing

Prices

Culture.

Getting too commercial, politics.

Politics.

People

Mountainous areas

Architecture.

Restaurants in Calgary.

Los Angeles

Trying to make ends meet, Calgary growing pains

Trying to find a good restaurant.

Road signs

People, industry, etc.

Overbuilding and crowding and ruining the view at Lake Louise with fast food restaurants

Too many people

Comfort for lodging.

Hotels.

Friendliness

Looking at a map.

Prices

Minneapolis

Industry and people

Quality of life; the wilderness is close, but it doesn't have to dominate your life

Crowds of people

Food in restaurants, stores etc.

Fine places to eat, things to do in the city.

Mountains and trees and the general climate. Banff was a lot like Aspen, Col.

The vacationing people.

Small towns

Networking, tourist traps

Family style -- farming community

Recreation possibilities/People

Everything but mountains

People

Montreal

The commercial way in which it advertises its beauty.

Work there

Buy a gift

Winter

Eating, good food.

Be clean, friendly and kind, and restaurants

Job situations

Type of food and restaurants

Nightlife

The weather

City life. Traffic jams and city nightlife is about the same except with a western flavor.

Toronto

Restaurants and hotels

People

Travel.

Cities.

People

Food.

Highways, shopping

People

Industry

People.

Hotels and airports

Vancouver

The people outside of the major population centers.

Service in restaurants, hotels, etc.

Cultural activity.

Hotels.

Country people

An area away from the ocean.

Employment in one's field.

It all looks the same in the snow.

Entertainment (other than beaches.)

The larger cities, except for the Western influence